

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 were rejected under Section 112 because of the use of the phrase "optionally" and the use of the phrase "optionally partially and recirculated." Claims 4-14 were objected to as being improper form.

The Applicants have amended all of the claims in, they assert, such a way as to overcome the object and the Section 112 rejection.

Enclosed with this amendment is a copy of the Preliminary Amendment which was originally mailed with the filing papers. Also enclosed is a copy of the postcard which was received back from the USPTO indicating that the Preliminary Amendment was part of that mailing. The undersigned understands that the Preliminary Amendment was not entered into the record but would like to show the Examiner that there was an intent to file a Preliminary Amendment along with the application when it was filed. Thus, the Applicants believe that the proposed amendments to the specification in this amendment should be acceptable. If the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at 713-241-3356.

Claims 1-3 have been rejected under Section 102(b) as being anticipated by Botti et al. The Examiner says that Botti discloses a power generation system including a fuel supply, a reformer, an engine, a solid oxide fuel cell, a heat exchanger, an air supply, an exhaust catalyst, and an electrical source. The Examiner asserts that all of the elements of claim 1 as considered by the Examiner were encompassed in this reference.

The Applicants assert that the claims as amended are not anticipated by Botti et al. The claims have been amended to require a NO_x abatement system, that the exhaust gas be partly recirculated to the combustion chamber of the engine, that the non-recirculated part of the exhaust be supplied to the NO_x abatement system and that at least part of the synthesis gas be supplied to the NO_x abatement system. None of these features are in the cited reference.

Botti et al. is directed mainly at a hybrid electrical power train and is devoid of any further information on how to improve the performance of a NO_x abatement system through selection of engine and reformer fuel. The Applicants assert that there is no reason why a skilled person would have contemplated this reference when looking for a solution to the problem referred to immediately above which is solved by the present invention. The Applicants assert

that the features added to the claims in these claim amendments provide important advantages to the overall system. The use of the synthesis gas in the combustion chamber of the engine and in the NO_x abatement system helps produce a cleaner exhaust. The technical effect of the use of the exhaust gas recycle is that synthesis gas can be introduced into the engine without reaching flammability limits (see page 10, lines 5-15 of the specification), thereby inherently allowing safer operation while allowing optimal exhaust gas treatment.

For the reasons discussed above, the Applicants assert that the rejections have been overcome. An early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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